

American is third in line for earldom

Associated Press

LONDON -- The 200th annual edition of Debrett's Peerage, the handbook of Britain's high born, came out yesterday with news that an American isn't likely to become the next Earl of Essex.

A British postal employee appears first in line.

Bladen Horace Capell, 47, Yuza City, Calif., is listed third among the male heirs to Reginald George De Vere Capell, 62, who became the ninth Earl of Essex three years ago.

Debrett's editor, Patrick W. Montague-Smith, said Robert De Vere Capell, 49, of Morecambe in northwest England, has completed "the vast quantity of certificates required to prove that he is heir presumptive." Second in line would be Robert Capell's son, Frederick, 25.

The first earl, created by Charles II in 1661, was the son of a royalist general who had been beheaded in 1649 for his opposition to Cromwell's forces. The present title is believed to carry little inheritance.

The line of descent after the ninth earl had been in doubt for several years because of the difficulty in tracing members of the family

who had died in Australia and Japan.

Robert Capell would have to submit his lineage for scrutiny by a committee of the House of Lords if he intended to claim the title after the present earl's death.

The latest Debrett's includes more than 3,100 pages bound in scarlet and gold. It is a must for those who keep up with the ranks and privileges of titled Britons.

The book was named after John Debrett, its editor, in 1802, 33 years after the first edition was published.

Montague-Smith said the current Debrett's lists about 2,000 titles and some 80,000 members of noble families.

Sgt. M. Capell.

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